



# & Workers' Liberty Solidarity

For social ownership of the banks and industry

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**The left campaign against Brexit:**

**FOR A VOTE  
ON THE  
DEAL  
DEFEND  
FREE  
MOVEMENT**

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# Brutal crackdown on China's Uyghurs

By Ben Tausz

**News of state repression against China's Uyghur people have become prominent in recent months. Reports at the UN estimate up to a million are held in internment camps.**

China denies the mass detention and points to constitutional guarantees of equality and religious freedom, but the mounting evidence is discrediting such pretences.

The Uyghur people are a Turkic, majority-Sunni Muslim, ethnic group making up around 46% of China's northwestern Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Despite the Communist Party's claims of equality, many ethnic minorities have long been disadvantaged and marginalised. Subject to employment discrimination in the big cities, Uyghurs have been left out of China's rapid urbanisation in recent decades: over 80% remain farmers.

In recent decades, Xinjiang has seen agitation for independence, and sporadic terrorist attacks linked to both separatism and Islamism. In 2009, racial tensions erupted into deadly riots in the city of Urumqi.

Xinjiang is a crucial fossil fuel

producer and a vital artery for China's reach into central Asian and Middle Eastern markets — key to China's Belt and Road Initiative. This is the effort to tie large swathes of the world together into a China-led economic sphere, as China seeks to compete as an imperial superpower.

With unrest and separatism in Xinjiang posing a threat to Beijing's interests, violent Islamism (while real) has been used to excuse a population-wide crackdown. This has brutally intensified since the arrival in 2016 of new provincial Party Secretary Chen Quanguo, fresh from repressing dissent in Tibet.

Chen has transformed Xinjiang into an intensely surveilled police state. Police recruitment and security spending have skyrocketed. Communities are divided into grid squares of about 500 people, each monitored by its own police station and extensive CCTV. Uyghurs are held up at multiple checkpoints per day. Passports have been confiscated en masse. Religious expression, from long beards to giving children names like Muhammad, is increasingly suppressed.

Officials go house-to-house compiling dossiers, noting "extremist" and "undesirable" activity such as political dissent, owning a Qur'an or fasting during Ramadan. Citizens



Uyghur demonstration in the USA against Chinese state repression

are scored for "trustworthiness": simply being Uyghur or practicing Islam lowers your score. Some officials are even installed living in Uyghur family homes. Citizens are required to install government spyware on their mobiles and biometric data is collected during health checks.

These immense datasets are fed into a machine-learning AI program that seeks out patterns and generates lists of suspects for detention. Human rights analysts now estimate that 500,000 to a mil-

lion Uyghurs have been extra-judicially imprisoned for, eyewitnesses claim, physical torture and political brainwashing. Even the government's own documents use terms like "psychological counselling", "behavioural correction" and "thought education".

Burned by the Free Tibet movement, the Chinese state is apparently attempting to disrupt the development of a politically-active diaspora. Officials have contacted Uyghurs living abroad with demands that they surrender per-

sonal data or return home, threatening their family members in China if they refused.

**Trump is now considering sanctions in response. Perhaps these would yield some limited relief, despite the gross hypocrisy of a government itself engaged in rampant anti-Muslim racism and mainly interested in imperial competition. The socialist and labour movements must seek ways to build our own solidarity with those subject to exploitation and repression by the Chinese ruling class.**

## Far right on rise in Sweden

By Will Sefton

**The success of far-right populists across Europe continued in Sweden with a surge in support for the Sweden Democrats who took in 17.6 percent of the vote, coming third against the left and right blocs.**

Both blocs have refused to form a coalition with them but with a motion of confidence due for Swedish Prime Minister and Swedish Social Democrat leader Stefan Löfven, Sweden Democrats leader Jimmie Akesson believes Löfven will have to negotiate with him.

Akesson focused his election campaign firmly on migration and law and order. He is also in favour of holding a referendum to leave the EU.

The incumbent government, a coalition of the Social Democrats and the Green Party with support from the Left Party, saw its overall vote fall to 40.6%, although the Left Party gained 7 seats.

Over 40% of voters are believed to have voted for a different party than in 2014, suggesting widespread dissatisfaction with both the government and centre-right opposition.

The Social Democrats vote share of 28.4 percent is the lowest in a century. Compare this to the Swe-

den Democrats who have steadily built support since their foundation 30 years ago. It managed a breakthrough in 2010, getting 5.7 percent, entering parliament for the first time.

Much like the populist right elsewhere they have substantially "rebranded" with their original symbol of a burning torch now a blue and yellow daisy.

### NAZIS

**Akesson has gone some way to purge neo-Nazis from the organisation but has also stated that former Nazis who can "credibly demonstrate that you have changed and developed your values" are welcome to join the Party.**

The organisation officially banned the swastika and the wearing of Nazi uniforms in 1996 but even during this election a city council candidate posted on Facebook to say that Hitler wanted to "remove the Jewish plague from Europe in a humane way".

**Despite this, Sweden Democrats sit in the same group in the European Parliament as the Tories! With the Tory leader in the European Parliament, Ashley Fox, championing their recent attempts to clean up their image.**

## Trump targets Palestinians

By Cathy Nugent

**The US plans huge cuts to its humanitarian aid to Palestinians. The cuts have plausibly been linked to the Trump administration's attempt to force the Palestinian Authority into accepting a new "peace deal".**

The cuts follow the Palestinian Authority suspension of contact with the US administration which in turn follow the US's decision to recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

The cuts amount to around \$300 million. Specifically the US has said it would end all its funding of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) which provides aid to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, and in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. The cut represents about 30% of UNRWA's yearly budget.

There is now a crisis in Gaza. 171 Palestinians have been killed this year at demonstrations near the border with Israel. Israel has tightened restrictions on access to Gaza via Karem Shalom, the main commercial crossing. Egypt's border with Gaza is only sporadically opened. Israel has banned all goods from exiting. Materials banned from entering include construction materials, water pumps, spare

parts, generators, clothing, blankets and mattresses. Fuel and cooking gas has also been severely restricted. These restrictions have badly affected projects aimed at improving water facilities.

According to the Palestinian Authority figures 34% of Gazans live on less than \$3.60 per day, and 49% are unemployed.

These cuts will make the blockade of Gaza worse, but the aim is, in fact, the undermining of Palestinian political life. Strong criticisms can be made of the respective political forces in charge in those places — Hamas's repressive theocratic politics and violent hostility to the existence of Israel and Fatah's undemocratic and corrupt political practices. But collective punishment of the Palestinians for any perceived and real crimes of political leaders is unjust and immoral. Moreover, the US's policy is aimed at destroying Palestinian self-determination and the now very precarious hope of an independent state.

Trump's "peace deal", which he has called "the Deal of the Century", has not yet been unveiled but is reported to be an economic development programme for Gaza and West Bank as long as the Palestinians concede permanent control over Jerusalem, a large settlement

zones for Israelis and a continuation of the limited "self government" they now have. The idea then is a vile tactic of stick followed by carrot — starve the Palestinians, then offer them some money.

The further cut in aid is being made alongside proposed legislation which would seek to change the official definition of Palestinian refugees, stripping the descendants of the 1948 expulsion and restricting it only to surviving refugees. This will undercut the Palestinian demand for the "right of return". Such a demand could only have ever be a negotiating point — the return of all refugees and their descendants would make the state of Israel unviable.

Even so the Palestinian diaspora surely has the right to demand compensation and potentially for some thousands of descendants of refugees to resettle in either a new Palestinian state or in an Israel, existing alongside that Palestinian state.

**It is not clear that the US can achieve its plan unilaterally without backing from Arab governments. That gives a little hope. Whatever, it is a long way from a just two-states settlement. International labour movements must oppose these cuts in aid which signal a radical turning away**



# 25 killed in Iraq protests

By Nadia Mahmood

**For two months now, since 8 July, there has been a wave of street demonstrations in southern Iraq, a rise of social agitation such as has not been seen since the almost-civil-war of 2006-7.**

The protests were triggered by the Iranian government cutting off electricity supplies to the major southern Iraqi port city, Basra, most of which come by grid from Iran rather than being generated locally. They then took up the issues of jobs - unemployment is very high in Iraq - and corruption.

Over the last couple of weeks, the focus has shifted to contamination in the water supply in Basra, and protests in other cities against the killing or kidnapping of demonstrators in Basra. About 25 demonstrators have been killed so far, in Basra mostly by the SWAT (Special Weapons And Tactics) special police units, so named after the US model.

In other cities, other police forces, the army, and militia units (given official recognition by the government) have harassed demonstrators.

The protests have spread to Nasiriyah, Amarah, Najaf, and Baghdad. They have not yet spread

to the mainly-Sunni cities further north, but the Baghdad protests have mobilised Sunnis as well as Shia (who are the big majority in cities further south).

The protests usually gather hundreds rather than thousands, but they take place in many suburbs in each city. They are organised by word of mouth and social media. Almost all the protesters are young men, aged between 16 and 30. It is a general problem in Iraq, since 2006-7 especially, and not specific to these protests, that young women students and workers, even from the poorest families, stay at home, fearing to go out except when they travel by car to work or university.

It remains to be seen how the protests will develop in the coming weeks when, first, the Shia religious ceremonies leading up to the rites of Ashura begin (from 11 September), and, later, universities start their new year.

In Garmat Ali, just north of Basra, protesters took over control of the town for a while. The police ran away, though they later re-established control.

In Basra the protesters have burned down the city council buildings, and burned portraits of the Iranian Supreme Leaders, Khomeini and Khamenei. The city



council is run by the Al-Hikma party, formerly SCIRI, generally regarded as the party in Iraq closest to the Iranian government.

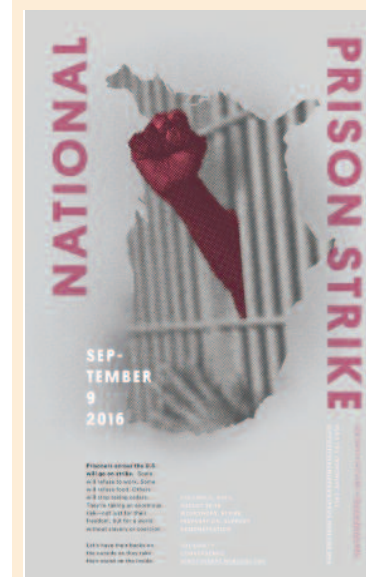
Resentment against Iranian domination in Iraq is a strong element in the demonstrations. In Baghdad, at least, there are also explicitly secularist elements in the demonstrations.

In Basra, also, port workers have stated that they will stop oil being exported, and young protesters have blockaded the port of Umm Qasr.

The Sadr Movement, a Shia Islamist movement with more autonomy from Iran which, in coalition with the Iraqi Communist Party, did relatively well in the May 2018 elections, has expressed sympathy for the protests, but organised no action.

**The Worker-communist Party of Iraq has called on the protesters to organise elected committees in the neighbourhoods to challenge and take power from the corrupt city councils and other authorities.**

## Prison strike met with repression



By Gemma Short

**A nationwide strike by prisoners in the US (and some parts of Canada) officially ended on 9 September, but repercussions for those that took part continue and some prisoners are continuing hunger strikes or other non-compliance in response.**

Organisers estimate that imprisoned people in over 14 states participated in forms of action that varied from work strikes, commissary boycotts, sit-ins, hunger strikes and yard rallies. Jailhouse Lawyers Speak and the Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee (IWOC) reported after week one of the strike actions in: Washington where immigrant detainees at Northwest Detention centre declared a hunger strike and an estimated 70 took part; Georgia state prison "Reidsville"; South Carolina where work strikes and commissary boycotts are reported in Broad River, Lee, McCormick, Turbeville, Kershaw and Lieber Correctional Institutions; Hyde Correctional Institution in North Carolina; New Folsom Prison in California; Toledo Correctional Institution in Ohio; Wabash Correctional Institution in Indiana; Lea County Correctional Facility in New Mexico; Charlotte, Dade, Franklin, Holmes and Apalachee Correctional Institutions in Florida; Anderson County in Texas; and Burnside County Jail in Nova Scotia, Canada.

Outside organisers with Jailhouse Lawyers Speak, IWOC and others have organised solidarity rallies, and "phone zaps" during the strike and since in order to put pressure on authorities who are retaliating against organisers and those taking part in the strike. Students at Harvard Law school also organised a rally in support of the strike.

**Organisers are now asking people to sign a petition ([bit.ly/2N5FIGD](http://bit.ly/2N5FIGD)) in support of the prisoners' demands and in order to maintain the pressure of the strike.**

# Threat of US-backed coup as Venezuela crisis deepens

By Eduardo Tovar

**Amid economic crisis and civil unrest in Venezuela, the New York Times reported on 8 September 2018 that the Trump administration has been in secret talks with Venezuelan military officers to stage a coup against President Nicolás Maduro.**

This follows Trump's indications in August last year of a 'military option' for Venezuela.

Given the long and bloody history of US-backed coups in Latin America, this news is very alarming. As supporters of self-determination and consistent democracy, socialists should vehemently oppose any move towards a right-wing military coup supported by an imperialist power. Such a coup would inflict even more suffering upon the Venezuelan people than they have endured throughout this period of crisis, and bring the country under a deeply reactionary regime.

That said, we should be under no illusions about the nature of Maduro's government or of the Chavista project more broadly. Workers' Liberty has never accepted Chavismo as socialist or in transition to socialism. Instead, many of us regard it as a kind of

Bonapartism because of the way it maintains an uneasy alliance between sections of the working class, the national bourgeoisie, and the military, with the latter playing a central role in administering the state.

This civic-military alliance has been fundamental to Chavismo since its inception, with Hugo Chávez himself having enjoyed a long career as an army officer. Nor has the military's centrality diminished under Maduro: according to one estimate, 11 of the 23 state governors in Venezuela were current or retired military officers by August 2017. In other words, Venezuela is already in a significant sense controlled by the military: it is now only a question of which faction.

## ESCAPE

**The Venezuela crisis has seen an estimated 2.3 million Venezuelans flee their homeland in recent years, the bulk of whom have sought refuge in neighbouring Colombia, with many thousands venturing further still to Chile, Ecuador, and Peru.**

They have done so to escape hyperinflation, mass hunger, and major shortages in hospitals across the country.

While internal opposition to Maduro from large swathes of the



Venezuelan opposition has support among some of the military and the USA

Venezuelan bourgeoisie and constant external pressure from the US have certainly exacerbated Venezuela's troubles, much of the country's devastation directly stems from the fact that its entire economy is built around a single resource: oil. Such a mono-economy was virtually guaranteed to face catastrophe when oil prices plummeted: a danger that neither Chávez nor Maduro took any meaningful steps to avoid.

In short, while we must defend Venezuela's political independence

and internal democracy from both military plotters at home and imperialist powers abroad, we should not pretend that Maduro is blameless in this crisis or that his regime is a workers' government. Only an independently organised working class can save Venezuela from militaristic authoritarianism and foreign intervention alike.

**While the left opposition in Venezuela is weak and disparate, it is our duty to reach out to them and learn how we can aid them in their struggle.**



# Chagos: an incomplete decolonisation

## THE GLOBAL LEFT

The Mauritian socialist group LALIT explains the background to their government's recent challenge to British sovereignty of the Chagos islands at the United Nations court, the International Court of Justice at The Hague.

**This court case, 50 years after the events was "riveting" - unusual for any court case.**

It was riveting because of the only-just-suppressed rage of many of those speaking in favour of the UN General Assembly resolution calling on the ICJ to give an Advisory Opinion on whether Britain in the 1960s completed the decolonisation of Mauritius, when it excised Chagos from Mauritius, and what the consequences of this incomplete decolonisation are today, including for the re-settling by the Mauritian government of the Chagossian people on their home islands.

We in LALIT and all our friends, comrades, colleagues in the struggle over the past 40 years, had the additional feeling of being vindicated. All our arguments — logical and humane — were on international display, when we have spent decades answering the childish British arguments, often mimicked by subservient local elites that say, "Old Man Ramgoolam sold Chagos to the English", therefore there is nothing you can do about it.

At the ICJ, all the finer points of law we have, as mere amateurs in LALIT, grappled with for years, were teased out and discussed by top legal minds of the world, and we could all follow this live. And almost all arguments were in favour of the ICJ giving an Opinion, and giving it against Britain for not completing decolonisation, and also calling on the Court to lay out the consequences for today of this failure to complete decolonisation.

There was also on show, on the British side, a rather despicable display of colonial contempt, in particular on the part of the big four coloniser-defenders: Britain, the USA, Israel and — though an ex-colony herself — Australia.

Their arguments — these four — maintained that the Resolution sent to the ICJ by the entire General Assembly was a mere "bilateral dispute" between Mauritius and Britain, and therefore not admissible before

the Court at all because, they argued, one of the parties to this supposedly bilateral dispute, i.e. Britain, has not given its consent!

So, this point became one of the main debates: Is the question of the excision of all the islands of Chagos from Mauritius a "bilateral dispute" or a question of decolonisation and self-determination, supported by many Resolutions, one such Resolution even warning Britain specifically not to dismember Mauritius in this way?

Britain was taken to task for its arguments that verged on the ridiculous when it came to the substantive issues.

Britain argued that Chagos was 2,000 kilometres away from the other islands of the Republic of Mauritius, therefore it, Britain, 10,000 kilometres away should have sovereignty. Do we laugh or cry, on hearing such rubbish?

Or why Britain should have hidden so stealthily from the United Nations General Assembly that they were dismembering Mauritius, or secretly spirited the 2,000 Chagossian Mauritians living there to Mauritius main Island, claiming in a wildly sexist and racist statement at the time that there were no people living there at all, just a few birds there (not — yet — protected by international conventions) and just a few "man Fridays"? Why should Britain have pretended the US military base they were conspiring to get set up there was a mere "communications station"? Why all the deception, if as they now try to say, it was still normal by the 1960s to divide up territories prior to independence?

## BRITAIN

**Britain was exposed again and again as having suddenly found a reason for seeing Chagos as worth keeping (when the USA wanted a military base there) and then finding devious ways of keeping and depopulating the islands.**

So this whim to have a base, meant Britain thought it was justified in passing Orders-in-Council to excise Chagos from Mauritius all of a sudden, and then to drive the Chagossians off over the next 8 years.

Only a colonising power could not see the absurdity of throwing to the wind international law on decolonisation and Chagossians' human rights to live where they live, just because it wanted a place for a base. And Britain has continued in this vein, still pretending it would "return" or later merely



"cede" Chagos when it no longer required it. And who would decide when it no longer required it? Well, obviously, the colonisers. They are the only people who are people.

All this came out in the argumentation by all those who spoke in favour of the UN General Assembly resolution for the 15-member ICJ to give an Advisory Opinion. One of the refrains was, understandably and predictably, that Britain is merely trying to "justify the unjustifiable".

So, finally, all those who have contributed to this struggle: Chagossians like the late Charlesia Alexis and Aurelie Talate, and the 150 or so Chagossian women, and all the Chagossian people and their organizations who we, in LALIT, struggled alongside for all those years, first and foremost. In particular the Chagos Refugees Group and the Organizasyon Sosyal Chagossin. And then there were the eight women — five Chagossians, three in LALIT — who were arrested and charged with illegal demonstration in 1981, for putting the issue on the agenda in Mauritius, by means of street demonstrations in

Port Louis for three days running in support of a hunger strike by Chagossian women. And then there are all the Mauritian organizations — like the Comité Ilois of the Organisation Fraternel, the MMM branches in the 1970s in Port Louis, the unions in the General Workers' Federation, the Muvman Liberyasyon Fam, The Komite Moris Losean Indyin and the late Kishore Mundil, the Komite Rann nu Diego in the 1990s and the two LALIT International Action Conferences, the Komite Diego set up in 2006 and still in existence. It is the hard political work of these combined efforts that forced the Mauritian State finally to go to the ICJ.

**And even abroad, there have been, in addition to States, organizations and individuals like the No Bases Movement, filmmakers like Paedar King, Michel Daeron, John Pilger and others, and many, many workers and peoples' organizations over the 40 years who have supported the Diego Garcia struggle through LALIT.**

• [www.lalitmauritius.org/](http://www.lalitmauritius.org/)

## Workers' Liberty Australia 70 is out now

**Workers' Liberty**

The newspaper of the working class and for the act of the working class itself  
2020 1400 4147 No. 70 Spring 2019 <http://australia.workersliberty.org>

### The right to strike and Changing the Rules

By Bob Carnegie and Martin Thomas  
The ACTU's new campaign to "Change the Rules" makes the case for the "right" of working class people to have a say in the way they work and live. It is a positive move, but not by itself sufficient. The more active unions need to supplement it by a public campaign for the right to strike.

Gillard wrote the Fair Work Act. Shorten was there too.

Break the RULES

The campaign is a positive move, but not by itself sufficient. The more active unions need to supplement it by a public campaign for the right to strike.

The Australian industrial relations system is exceptional in giving great weight and spread to official arbitration procedures, and

Inside this issue  
• The right to strike and Changing the Rules  
• Morrison and Dutton: jackals of the ruling class  
• What will it take to "Change the Rules"?  
• Living Wage for working women  
• RAFFWU Woolworths activist interview  
• Student workers getting organised  
• Financial services Royal Commission and FSU  
• Why Study Das Kapital  
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Over 70 student activists attended the Student Activist Weekender on 7 - 9 September 2018. More details [anticuts.com](http://anticuts.com)





# Labour movement can stop Brexit!

**The Tory ex-Minister Steve Baker has claimed that as many as 80 MPs will revolt and seek to replace May with Boris Johnson if she tries to force through her Chequers plan — a complex system of co-operation with EU rules.**

The threat has created a new crisis in the Tory party and government. May and her allies know Labour MPs will oppose any such deal and that they will need the backing of almost all Tories to win the vote.

The retaliatory threat of a “No Deal Brexit” is all that May can do to try and tame the Brexiteers in the Tory Party.

Meanwhile, although the EU’s lead negotiator Michel Barnier has publicly said that the Chequers plan lays down important benchmarks and that he is confident that a deal can be reached by November, he is rumoured to believe that the deal is dead-in-the-water.

An increasingly tight schedule to get the deal finalised by the government’s own deadline is making things even worse for May.

But the campaign to stop Brexit received a welcome boost this week as the GMB and the TUC came out in favour of a potential referendum vote on the final deal, with an option for Britain to remain in the EU.

A TUC General Council motion passed at TUC conference on 10 September says, “We do not rule out the possibility of campaigning for people to have a final say on the Brexit deal through a popular vote.”

It is clear that the labour movement opinion is beginning to shift on the necessity of opposing Brexit. The Labour Party’s official position now looks isolated. With eight months to go until the Brexit deadline a wait-and-see and hope-for-a-general-election approach is looking increasingly unrealistic. Even with the Tories in crisis, it could be four years until a general election, an election where Labour would still have an unclear policy.

John McDonnell seems to acknowledge these contradictions in *The Observer* on 9 September. He said that while preferring a general election, he believed Labour should keep all its options open, including the potential for a referendum on the deal and that

the People’s Vote campaign had been “constructive”. That view should be welcomed. Even more welcome from trade unions and Labour would be a clear commitment to maintaining free movement and defending

and extending the rights of migrants.

Sections of the left have decided the campaign for a vote on the deal is a plot to undermine the leadership and is only about strengthening the hand of the Labour right.

## Help us raise £15,000

**Workers' Liberty is launching a new fundraising appeal to raise £15,000 between now and June 2019.**

We will use this money to produce more books, create online videos arguing the case for socialism and improve our organising work.

This week it was reported that some UK families have been unable to feed themselves in the school holidays. The lack of free school meals pushed them into dependency on food banks in order to survive. The exploitation and inequality of capitalism is exposed everyday by stories like this.

Workers’ Liberty exists to build support for the argument that capitalism must be replaced by collective ownership and sustainable planning for people’s needs — socialism. Please help us amplify our voice.

We have no big money backers. We rely on contributions from readers! So please consider doing one of the following things to help us out.

We kick start the fund with £60 raised at Lewisham AWL’s annual summer event, and £1000 from an individual donor.

### -Subscribe to Solidarity

You can subscribe to Solidarity for a trial period of 6 issues for £7, for 6 months for £22 (waged) or £11 (unwaged) or for a whole year for £44 (waged) or £22 (unwaged). See back page for form.

### -Taking out a monthly standing order

Taking out a standing order, of any amount. If you take out a standing order you will also receive Solidarity.

See [www.workersliberty.org/donate](http://www.workersliberty.org/donate) for instructions.

### -Making a one-off donation

You can donate by sending us a cheque, setting up a bank transfer or via PayPal.

See [www.workersliberty.org/donate](http://www.workersliberty.org/donate)

### -Organising a fundraising event in your local area

Could you organise a fundraising film showing, walking tour, theatrical performance or meeting in your local area?

### -Committing to do a sponsored activity and asking others to sponsor you

### -Buying some of our books or pamphlets

See [www.workersliberty.org/books](http://www.workersliberty.org/books)



Opposition to Brexit is not a right-wing plot. Equally there is nothing wrong in criticising the Corbyn leadership or pushing it into changing its position. Political debate and challenges are life blood of healthy democratic movements.

McDonnell expects their to be a full debate on the issue at Labour conference. Support for some version of the People’s Vote motion is now widespread across local Labour Parties including those with left majorities on their conference delegations. At the conference delegates can be confident that support for a second vote and stopping Brexit will have wide support and the debate is likely to be prioritised.

Momentum have said they won’t advise members to vote against any motion on the People’s Vote.

A YouGov poll of trade union members from the three largest unions also shows increased support for a referendum on the final deal. In each case between 55% and 66% of members of those unions want to remain in the EU, are concerned that living standards will deteriorate after Brexit and think leaving the EU is likely to worsen job prospects.

A minority of trade unions, the most vocal being the RMT, have continued to take a pro-Brexit but, in fact, incoherent stance. RMT General Secretary Mick Cash has said, “Let’s be honest here: the people’s vote or popular vote is nothing more than a Trojan horse to a second EU referendum, a second referendum that will lead to social unrest.”

In the fact the RMT is positively for Brexit, on the basis of a mythical national sovereignty and scare-mongering about the power of the EU being somehow far greater than that of the British state. Cash said his alternative was for an election that would bring in a Corbyn government. A fine idea but Brexit would not be any more plain sailing for a Labour government than it would for a Tory one!

**PCS General Secretary, Mark Serwotka has been clearer on this issue, saying it is possible to walk and chew gum, you can be in favour of electing a Corbyn government, opposing the Labour right and still be for the People’s Vote. He is surely right.**



# Brexit and the labour mov

**The annual conference of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty will be held on 24-25 November. We are publishing the proposed main policy documents in *Solidarity*. The following document is on how we think the left should assess and oppose Brexit.**

**We oppose Brexit. We oppose it in the name of the rights of the three million EU migrants currently in Britain, our workmates, our neighbours, our friends, our fellow trade-unionists. To defend their right to reunite their families. To sustain the right of others across Europe to come to work and live in Britain, and the right of British-born people to go to work and live in Europe.**

We want more open borders, less fences and barbed-wire and barriers between countries. The technologies and productive capacities of today indict the division of continents into walled-off nation-states.

Socialists build on the progressive achievements (and semi-achievements, and quarter-achievements) of capitalism, rather than trying to reach the future by diving back into an idealised past.

The way beyond capitalism is through united left-wing and working-class efforts reaching across borders, uniting workers continent-wide and worldwide.

In fact, the drive behind Brexit is specifically and primarily a drive against the now decades-old right to free movement across Europe. We defend that right.

The Tories want to find a formula to stop Brexit re-raising barriers along the border within Ireland, and talk hopefully about how high-tech wizardry can help. It is hard to see how it can do that decisively. Its effect on poisoning relations between the communities in Ireland is also a big reason to oppose Brexit.

Some on the left have made it their pitch that the Tories will produce a very "hard" Brexit. That may not be true. The argument against Brexit should be made on the positive and principled grounds of free movement, lower borders, social levelling-up, and a fight to democratise the EU, not just on the negative claim that the Tories will impose extreme Brexit.

In fact there is strong ruling-class pressure on the Tories for a "softer" Brexit. Their official plan is now to keep Britain in the Single Market for goods (it does not operate comprehensively for services anyway) and to keep it half-in the Customs Union: both those after a transition period from March 2019 to December 2020 in which Britain will still comply fully with EU rules.

The Tories have been explicit that in the short term they do not want to repeal "social" measures introduced into Britain from the EU, such as TUPE. Big business finds those measures mild enough to live with. The Tory leadership knows that repealing those measures and aiming to make Britain a low-social-overhead, ultra-free-market offshore production site, as advocated by some Tory right-wingers, would make trade deals with the EU very difficult, and does not want to pay that price.

The Tories have conceded nothing on free movement. However, pressure from the ruling class may well limit their regressive moves on that, too.

We point all this out, not to calm worries and tell our listeners that Brexit will not be too bad, but to make our arguments against Brexit solid, principled, and free from demagoguery.

The June 2016 referendum was of dubious democratic authority. In any case it gave no mandate for the specifics of what the Tories are doing now. And in any case democracy

means that minorities must retain the opportunity to argue and become majorities.

We demand Labour opposes the Tories' Brexit plans all along the line. We deny that the Tories have any democratic right to push through a specific Brexit formula - which is a very different thing from the vague prospect of Brexit voted on in June 2016 - with parliamentary votes on the detail, and a referendum on the deal on terms that allow for rejection of the deal to mean status quo, i.e. not or not yet Brexit.

We advocate such a referendum give votes to 16 and 17 year olds and to all migrants resident in the UK (at the very least, all EU citizens), and allows media coverage for a diversity of views on both yes and no sides (the "debate" in the mass media before the June 2016 referendum was very heavily a Tory vs Tory one).

## LABOUR

**We advocate that Labour debate Brexit democratically, oppose Brexit, and campaign to seek a democratic mandate for reversing it.**

If the Tories push through a Brexit deal before Labour can come to office, we demand Labour commit to repealing new restrictions on free movement introduced under that deal and to re-aligning with the Single Market and Customs Union with a view to getting Britain back into the EU.

All these policies sit within a broader program of workers' unity across borders and national differences, winning democracy on a European level, social levelling-up across the continent, and replacement of the EU's free-market-ist rules with rules of international solidarity.

We have sought to build local Left Against Brexit activist groups, which organise street stalls, speakers and motions to labour-move-

ment bodies, local debates, rallies, and door-to-door campaigning.

We will seek to join these groups together into a coordinated Left Against Brexit network.

There is strong grass-roots feeling against Brexit. The 23 June "People's Vote" demonstration, heavily dependent on social media for its promotion, drew 100,000 people. The general picture is that more left-wing or liberal-minded people oppose Brexit, and more conservative and chauvinist-minded people support it.

Yet so far the running in anti-Brexit protests has been made by the Liberal Democrats and groupings on similar wavelengths.

The Liberal Democrats, as you might expect, oppose Brexit only on the grounds that EU membership is "good for Britain" (i.e. British capitalism). They couple their opposition to Brexit with no program for democracy and social levelling-up across Europe. They support "the principle of" freedom of movement, but qualify that as meaning that "restrictions sought by the government must take account of the vital importance of EU workers to the British economy, including public services", i.e. saying that the freedom can be restricted if the restriction does not appear to damage "the British [capitalist] economy" much.

We aim to create a pole, visible on the streets, combatting Brexit from a socialist and internationalist viewpoint.

That work should continue for years yet. Even if the Tories push through a Brexit deal, the details of the restrictions to be imposed on freedom of movement and so on will remain to be settled. The fight should continue to defeat or reverse those restrictions.

The Brexit drive is part of a worldwide picture of the chief political gains from the destabilisation caused by the 2008 crash and the economic travails since then being made by right-wing nationalist forces, "populist" in the sense of speaking demagogically and claiming to represent the "ordinary people" of a country against the ("foreign", or foreign-linked) "elites".

Internationally, that pattern has continued since June 2016, with Trump's victory in the USA, Erdogan's gaining of fuller powers, and Salvini's triumph in Italy.

Left-wing surges have also been generated by the economic disarray of the last decade: the Corbyn surge in Britain is one of them. The right-wing surge warns us that the alternative, in the medium term, to us finding the energy and strength to transform and improve the left sufficiently, is not just business-as-usual neoliberalism, but something uglier.

Trump is exceptional among the new right-nationalists in focusing on trade. Brexit sentiment in Britain has been mostly about immigration, not trade: most Brexit voters (according to surveys) and Brexit leaders (according to their statements) want the UK to stay very open to trade, only they dislike immigration more than they like trade.

In the USA it has been different. There is

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The British political labour movement is trying to recreate itself. Over the last three years something like half a million people

have joined the Labour Party, and done so mostly because they want to be politically active as left-wingers. Around 35,000 have joined Momentum for the same reason.

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# ement

much anti-immigrant sentiment there, but it is not overwhelming nor even necessarily increasing. Skepticism about trade has been on the rise since the 1990s, both in public opinion and in Congress. By September 2010, in a poll 53% said free trade agreements “hurt the USA”, and only 17% that they “helped”, where in 1999 there had been a majority for “helped”.

Nationalism directed against trade, and nationalism directed against migrants, are not identical, but today they interlink. The Trump who goes for trade wars with China, the EU, Canada, and Mexico is also the Trump who wants to build a wall against migrants across the Mexican border. The Brexiters who want to exclude East European migrants will also raise trade barriers between Britain and the EU (though while making vague promises of trade deals in other directions).

Socialists do not endorse capitalist free trade. We are not for the unfettered rule of markets. We are for fettering market forces through social-provision and worker-protection policies, as international as possible. As the working class gains political strength, we aim to make democratically-decided social solidarity the chief regulator of economic affairs.

We are not necessarily opposed, even, to all bourgeois protectionist policies. “Nursery tariffs”, allowing new industries to make a start in weaker countries, are not our way of doing things, but they have a rationale, and we would not condemn them in favour of undiluted free trade.

## MARX

**In general, however, our approach is as Marx outlined in 1847:**

“Do not imagine, gentlemen, that in criticising freedom of trade we have the least intention of defending the system of protection. One may declare oneself an enemy of the constitutional regime without declaring oneself a friend of the ancient [i.e. autocratic or aristocratic] regime...

“In general, the protective system of our day is conservative, while the free trade system is destructive. It breaks up old nationalities and pushes the antagonism of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie to the extreme point. In a word, the free trade system hastens the social revolution. It is in this revolutionary sense alone, gentlemen, that I vote in favour of free trade”.

Frederick Engels explained further when republishing Marx's text from 1847: “The question of Free Trade or Protection moves entirely within the bounds of the present system of capitalist production, and has, therefore, no direct interest for us socialists who want to do away with that system. Indirectly, however, it interests us inasmuch as we must desire as the present system of production to develop and expand as freely and as quickly as possible... From this point of view, Marx pronounced, in principle, in favour of Free Trade as the more progressive plan...”

A little later, when Lenin in 1902 wanted to



cite an easily-understood example of a typical socialist campaign of his day, he chose this: “Take, for example, the struggle the German Social-Democrats are now waging against the corn duties. The theoreticians write research works on tariff policy, with the 'call'... to struggle for commercial treaties and for Free Trade... The 'concrete action' of the masses takes the form of signing petitions ... against raising the corn duties”.

Free trade first spread in the mid-19th century. Tariff protection became more popular with governments later in the 19th century, but on the whole tariffs of the leading capitalist countries remained fairly low until about 1930, with the USA as the main exception.

A spiral of beggar-my-neighbour tariffs in the 1930s crashed world trade and worsened the economic slump then.

Since World War Two it has been bourgeois orthodoxy to favour making trade barriers low, with argument only about the scale and type of the exceptions to that rule. From the 1960s the running-into-a-wall of “developmentalist” trade barrier regimes in second-tier capitalist countries from Ireland to Argentina has broadened the hold of that orthodoxy.

After the crash of 2008, the chief, in fact only clear-cut, decision of the emergency G20 summit of November 2008 was to demand of all governments that they avoid building trade barriers in response. On the whole, that decision held.

The USA has always been an exception within the capitalist free-trade world order it has promoted and keystoneed since World War 2.

Because of the USA's size, its relatively small (though increasing, from 10% in 1970 to 25% now) ratio of trade to GDP, and its status as home to so many multinationals, an expert comments that: “The United States has not historically worried much about how to make itself an attractive location for investment geared towards exports”, though pretty much all other governments have worried greatly and increasingly about that.

The USA has simultaneously been the keystone of a relatively free-trade world-market system, and often the most reckless and narrow-minded about the necessary capitalist

give-and-take. That contradiction has been kept within bounds for decades. With Trump, it could prove deadly.

There are strong forces of inertia which will act to stop Trump's measures decisively destabilising the world's more-or-less free-trade system, at least for now.

Even the hardest Brexiters among the Tories want some trade deal with the EU, and want more trade deals with non-EU states. Nationalist-populist parties in Europe like France's Front National (now renamed Rassemblement National) and Italy's Lega and Five Star Movement have, as they have neared or looked like nearing government office, become more hesitant about policies which might reverse European economic integration.

US capitalists who have gone along with Trump in the belief or hope that his measures are only bluster designed to get new trade deals on more favourable terms are likely to rebel more decisively if they see trade conflicts spiralling out of control.

But all that is now, when the faltering economic recovery after 2008 is at about the strongest (or least weak) it has been since then.

## FAR-RIGHT

**The growth of a new far-right movement is a particular new development and part of the picture.**

One element of the new movement a continuation or revival of the former English Defence League milieu, which connected often casually-racist football firms with more developed nationalist politics. But the movement also has a core of fascist and neo-Nazi activists, such as Generation Identity, as well as links with and funding from figures on the international populist hard-right such as Steve Bannon and Geert Wilders. This movement has been able to mobilise on the streets in greater numbers than any far-right movement in Britain since the 1930s.

In this context, rebuilding a culture of working-class anti-fascism is vital, not as a campaigning activity to be outsourced to some external body (Hope Not Hate, Stand Up to Racism, or the mooted proposal of a re-launched Anti-Nazi League) but conducted by labour movement bodies - union branches

and local Labour Parties - under their own banner, directly mobilising their own members, on the basis of explicitly socialist politics.

What will happen in the next crisis? The crisis for which so much explosive material is accumulating in the financial markets? Will bourgeois patience and restraint hold the line then? Quite likely not.

The response of the labour movement cannot be to endorse the more far-sighted and rational elements of established bourgeois opinion.

But it must include vigorous rejection of the drift towards trade war, and of all suggestions that there is something socially-desirable or pro-working-class about the drift.

Against a determined push by the new right-wing nationalists, the liberal bourgeoisie will not safeguard the moderate extensions of formal equality, the modest opening of opportunities to ethnic minorities, the relative freedom of movement for some across some borders, the halfway secularism, the mild cosmopolitanism, on which it prides itself.

Having already let so many civil rights be swallowed by the “war on terror” and the drive for “labour flexibility”, it will be no bulwark for the rest. The liberal bourgeoisie may not even safeguard the achievement of which it boasts most, the reduction of economic barriers between countries.

Before the USA's Smoot-Hawley tariff law of 1930, which started a catastrophic spiral of protectionism and shrinking world trade, “economics faculties [in the USA]... were practically at one in their belief that the Hawley-Smoot bill was an iniquitous piece of legislation”. Over a thousand economists petitioned the US administration against it. It went through, and its effects spiralled.

It falls to the labour movement to defend even the limited bourgeois ameliorations.

**The labour movement cannot do that unless it mobilises; unless it cleanses itself of the accommodations to nationalism now so common over Brexit; and unless it spells out socialist answers which can convince and rally the millions of the economically marginalised and disillusioned. It falls to the left to make the labour movement fit for those tasks.**



# The development of antisemitism in

John Cunningham begins an evaluation of *The Jewish Question in Hungary After 1944*, a seminal work by Hungarian István Bibó (1911-1979). The second part of article will be published in the next issue of *Solidarity*.

**Bibó was not a Marxist but a member of the National Peasant Party (NPP) — a party of radical reformists who adhered to a political position which was loosely described as “the third road” (or “third way”): neither Communist (i.e. Stalinist) or capitalist.**

It was, in effect, left-reformist and probably closer to the politics of Bennism (but with an agrarian orientation) than anything else to which it could be compared in the UK today.

That political stream had a short existence from 1939 to 1948. In the Hungarian elections of 1945 the NPP won 42 seats in the National Assembly and in the (rigged) elections of 1949, as part of the so-called Hungarian Independent People's Front (Communist Party dominated), it won 39 seats but was then swallowed up by Rákosi's notorious “salami” tactics as the Communist Party “sliced” and destroyed the political opposition one-by-one.

Rákosi was the hard-line Stalinist Secretary of the Hungarian Communist Party in the immediate post-war period, later replaced by János Kádár.

In the anti-Stalinist 1956 Hungarian revolution Bibó joined the government of Imre Nagy and, by popular legend, was the last member of the inner committee remaining at his post as Russian troops took over the government building. He was arrested and after fifteen months in prison put on trial and given a life sentence.

After an amnesty in 1963 he was released but was given a minor clerical job in the statistical office and was under constant surveillance.

In difficult circumstances he continued to write and some of his essays were smuggled out of Hungary and published in the west.

*The Jewish Question in Hungary After 1944* was penned while it was still possible to publish articles which were critical and questioning, although you did have to tread carefully.



István Bibó

It was published in the Hungarian journal *Válasz* (The Answer) over two issues in October-November in 1948. *The Jewish Question* was an attempt to address some important issues about the situation of the Jewish population in post-Second World War, post-Holocaust Hungary and in particular the disturbing resurgence of antisemitism so soon after 1945. Over half a million Hungarian Jews lost their lives during WW2: to disease, starvation, deportation to Auschwitz, death in Labour Battalions or random executions by gangs from the Hungarian fascist movement, the Arrow Cross. Despite what had happened during the Holocaust there was little in the way of sympathy for the survivors and it was not long before antisemitic incidents were reported. Bibó mentions three of these but does not give any details.

Bibó, who was not Jewish, noticed that the official response and that of many others to the terrible events of the war years was first, to argue that the majority of Hungarians were not involved in the atrocities, that it was the work of the Germans and their collaborators while decent people tried to do what they could to help. The second response was to condemn the resurgence of antisemitism and an affirmation that it must be fought with all available force. Bibó astutely observed:

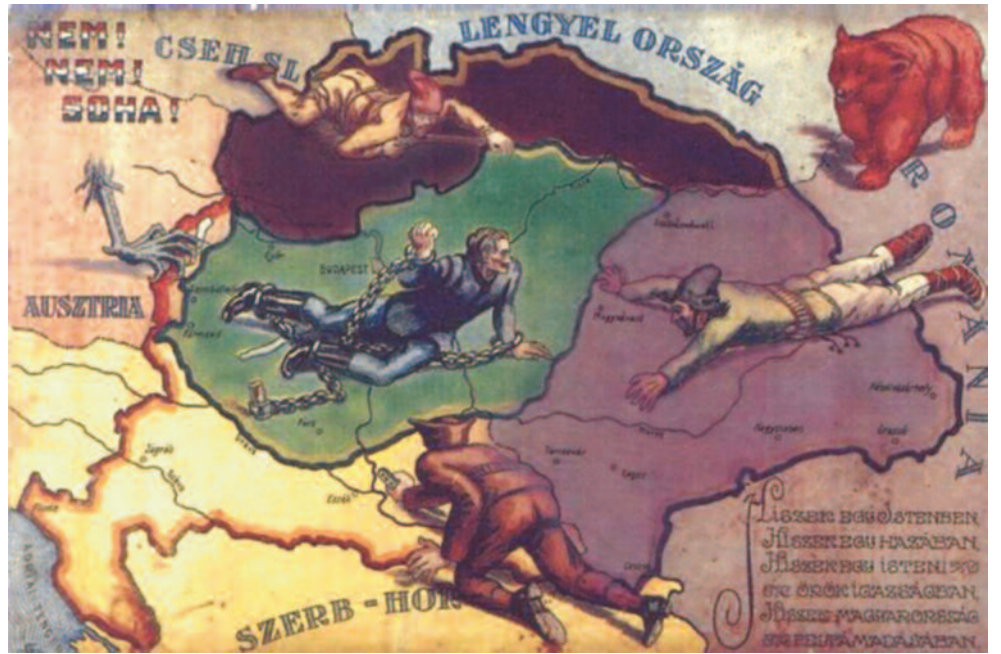
“Any group of decent people who gather anywhere with the aim of saying something morally elevated, humane and comforting about this issue will find that no matter how hard they try, they cannot add to these two theses yet deep down, everyone feels that neither says anything, or, to be more precise, that there is something that they are not saying.”

## SURFACE

**It is to this idea — that there is something not being said, something under the surface — that Bibó addresses the rest of his long essay.**

He begins by placing the issue of antisemitism within a historical perspective looking at how successive right-wing Hungarian governments had used far-right, fascist and semi-fascist groupings in the inter-war period to do their “dirty work” for them. Various pieces of anti-Jewish legislation were introduced, not to “steal the thunder” of the far right but to provide them with more ammunition by providing legal forms with which to carry on with their persecution. Yet Bibó speculates that for most Hungarians in the inter war years — the “solution of the Jewish issue” only meant decreeing that Jews earn less than non-Jews without any major changes in the structures of society and the economy. Few people considered that this nonsensical posturing could lead eventually to physical persecution and the anti-Jewish laws were passed off as “social reforms”. Some non-Jews benefitted from the anti-Jewish laws as they were able to take the jobs of Jews who had been fired, in the film industry, theatre and press for example. “These opportunities revealed and worsened the moral degradation of Hungarian society, presenting an appalling picture of insatiable avarice, a hypocritical lack of scruples, or at best cold opportunism...”

“Moral degradation” affected whole layers of society and Bibó specifically mentions the church and the intellectuals (many of whom were, of course, Jewish). The latter, on the occasions when they did speak out, protested against Jews being deprived of their equality



**Hungarian irredentist poster (probably early 1920s): a shackled Hungary surrounded by hostile Serbs, Romanians and Czechs, with a Russian bear lurking in the background. The larger border is that of ‘Historical Hungary’. The smaller area in green is Hungary after the Treaty of Trianon — the post-World War One settlement.**

as citizens. However, in a society where civil equality, particularly in the countryside, had never been highly developed, where national grievances (for example over the territory lost after the treaties at the end of WWI) dominated political discourse and often crowded out social concerns, the few voices speaking out for Jewry were, at best, marginal. As Bibó laments, the socialist movement in Hungary was small and isolated but did not even attempt to put forward a programme which rejected anti-Jewish legislation, affirmed Jewish rights, fought persecution, stood for Hungarian independence as against the steadily encroaching influence of the Nazis and advocated social and economic liberation for all Hungarians. This could have united the left-wing of the hitherto timid Hungarian Social Democratic Party, Hungarian intellectuals, Jewish activists and the illegal Communist Party, but it never happened. Those who did speak out often did so into a political void and were ignored or easily silenced.

One of the crucial questions that Bibó addresses is the official and public response to the Holocaust. Time and again those in authority and particularly the Communist Party refused to address the stark fact that without the active assistance of the police, politicians, civil servants and whole swathes of the Hungarian people, the Holocaust could not have happened or would have happened in a more muted form. The occupying Nazis and their Arrow Cross allies became the answer to everything and the question of responsibility, in the present and historically, was shunted off onto someone else. Bibó makes the point that Hungarian society never confronted this fact and, to this day, what he says is still true.

People did help Jews hide during the last few years of the war; there were individuals who did heroic deeds but:

“No matter how much sympathy or readiness to help may have existed here and there in this country, the persecuted did not and could not feel that the country, the community as a whole stood on their side or felt sympathy for them. We can recite as many true stories as we like concerning the Hun-

garian heroes of humanity and helpfulness, but it cannot be seriously alleged even for a moment, that the whole of persecuted Jewry had cause to feel gratitude toward the whole of the Hungarian nation, or that these two peoples grew closer to each other during the time of persecution — as was the case in Denmark, Holland, Yugoslavia, France [This is inaccurate. Did Bibó have up-to-date information about the situation in France?] and even Italy. And this is the decisive factor everything else is just empty talk.”

## CAUSES

**Bibó goes on to ask what were the causes of “Hungarian society’s moral bankruptcy”?**

He notes two important contrasts: on the one hand Hungarian Jews were met with “... malevolence, lack of sympathy, narrow-mindedness, and cowardice”. But, he adds, Hungary is not a country which is fundamentally malevolent, lacking in sympathy, narrow-minded or cowardly. “However, humanity, empathy, and courage are not isolated and free-standing qualities, but traits that depend on social circumstances.”

The idea that a country can be judged by the number of heroes or self-sacrificing saints teeming over with brotherly love is mere romanticism — these qualities can only emerge in certain social and communal circumstances. It is that sense of solidarity, community approval and support that was missing in Hungary. Why was this? Bibó suggests that at key points in Hungarian history: the defeat of the 1848 war of Independence, the 1867 “Great Compromise” (which created Austria-Hungary), the revolutions of 1918 and 1919 and the 1920 Trianon Treaty (by which Hungary lost much of its territory to its neighbours) — the vision of a better society, whatever form it might have taken (Marxist, social democratic or bourgeois-liberal), was sacrificed to “...an increasingly entangling set of unrealistic political dogmas, focusing on the restoration and viability of historical Hungary [i.e. Hungary prior to World War One] and the historical hierarchy of its society.”



# Hungary The fantasy of the bad apple

It is within this framework that the utterly disastrous decision of the Hungarian government to go war as an ally of Nazi Germany must be analysed. Successive Hungarian governments in the inter-war years had expressed the desire to recover the “lost territories”, particularly Transylvania (ceded to Romania in 1920) and this irredentism dominated Hungarian political life. Unable to do much themselves, Hungarian governments had to rely on the regional powerbrokers to do their work for them — this meant an alliance with Nazi Germany and eventually joining the war when the Nazis invaded the USSR.

## GRIEVANCES

**Thus, what Bibó sees as “righteous national grievances” (I disagree with Bibó here) — the claim to the “lost territories” — ultimately results in an alliance with fascism.**

“Within this process, those with less critical sense could not fathom the point in time when policies of alleviating national injuries and economically supplanting Jews deteriorated into political hooliganism and genocide.”

“The possibility for any type of human and courageous manifestations by wavering, middle-of-the-road average individuals was still precluded in part by their political mis-education and in part by the shamefully misleading behaviour of the country’s leaders. People were still convinced that, shocked as they may have been by the murder of Jews, they had to obey loyally the official Hungarian state apparatus and, as good Hungarians, wish for a German victory. In the final analysis, they tried to believe that they were witnessing the ‘degeneration’ of a process that was originally just, basically well-meaning, and well-initiated. If they felt sorry for the Jews or, especially, if they helped them, they did this in spite of their beliefs, with divided wavering consciences.”

What about the view that the majority of people in society did not know what was happening in Auschwitz or the other death camps? Or, if they had heard about the camps’ existence they simply didn’t believe it. Sentiments of this kind been encountered before in various places and in different contexts (for example it has long been the dishonest lament of many Stalinists that they had no idea about the existence of the Gulag). For Bibó, the arguments are more complex than simply believing or not believing,

**“As for us Hungarians, we started ‘doubting’ the stories about the extermination camps just when we had learned enough about the deportation trains to suspect that stories of the death camps were true. Moreover, we did not disbelieve because we steadfastly believed in human goodness, but in order not to have to face our own responsibility.”**



Fascist Arrow Cross marching in Budapest

Simon Nelson reviews  
‘BlacKkKlansman’, in cinemas now.

**BlacKkKlansman is an enjoyable caper. The premise of a rookie black cop infiltrating the KKK makes for an amusing story and has plenty of knowing winks to Trumpism and contemporary white nationalism.**

Given the content of the film, you have to make a judgement on the political stance of the film. For Lee that is a defence of the police.

Ron Stallworth the cop we are introduced to as the hero, is a victim of racism from within the police force. Together with some of his more liberal colleagues, the local chief, and a local black radical, now Stallworth’s girlfriend, they work to expose and take down the bad apple, racist cop! This is probably a bigger flight of fantasy than the real life story on which the film is based.

## INFILTRATION

**As Boots Riley, musician and former member of the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) a US Maoist group, has pointed out while Stallworth did spend some time infiltrating the Klan, he had no directive to disrupt their activities.**

Frequently police infiltration was about trying to get the Klan to clash with other organisations (the left) and thus giving the police a pretext for repression, especially of demonstrations.

Similarly, while the depiction of serving soldiers being a part of the Klan is true, there is no link made between them and the police — something which subsequent investigations have revealed. Stallworth was in fact most useful to the Colorado Springs Police in infiltrating the PLP as part of the FBI’s COINTELPRO. According to Stallworth’s autobiography, he would go undercover in PLP meetings to gather information about anti-



Radicals and cops are not friends

Klan actions and at the same time inform both the Klan and the police about PLP counterdemonstrations against Klan leader, David Duke.

In the film we are led to believe that Stallworth just turns up to a meeting with Kwame Ture speaking and lets the cops know afterwards that he isn’t too worried about the rhetoric of the speech. Ture was a tremendous reactionary, a notorious misogynist, but the film misleads by suggesting that in the late 1970s he was for an armed struggle of black people. This is a convenient mistruth for Lee, allowing the director to depict both the “white power” and “black power” movements as being predicated on violent hatred.

Riley’s criticism is prescient; Lee has been paid \$200,000 by the New York Police Department to work on an ad campaign aiming

to improve police relations with black and other minorities.

In a response to Riley, Lee said that “we need” police and it was absurd to suggest he would create a film that would challenge the idea of the police as an institution. Lee is a prominent Democrat who despite an earlier radical period of film-making (such as with the film ‘Do the Right Thing’), is now more of an established and respected liberal film maker who is able to push the boundaries of respectability just a little bit on the issue race.

**While it would be foolish to imagine that BlackKkKlansman would ever be a rallying cry for the overthrow of capitalism and to rid the world of the “muck of ages”, audiences should question just how much the work of anti-racism and anti-fascism can be aided by a “few good cops.”**

# Cops batter Irish marchers

**The following article is by Mick Woods, a former activist in the tendency which is now Workers’ Liberty, and who sadly died in July. The article is taken from a May 1981 edition of Socialist Organiser. It gives a little insight into left politics of the time, its often uncritical support for the Irish Republican movement, but also its liveliness.**

**One day after a massive force of police had shepherded 200 Nazis around the edge of Greater London, the cops were out in force to attack an anti-imperialist march in Kilburn.**

About 500 demonstrators turned up to a rally by Kilburn tube which heard the sister of a “blanket man” and veteran pacifist Pat Arrowsmith make the case for political status. We then attempted to march to Downing Street in defiance of Whitelaw’s ban on demonstrations in the Greater London area.

We were followed by cops, and after a few hundred yards were met by a police cordon. Rather than trying to break through and get



Mick Woods

to the heart of Kilburn, where more support should have been found from the local Irish

population as they were coming out of the pubs, we sat down — an old pacifist trick.

Passive resistance does not work in situations like this, however, and while we were sitting down in the road chanting “Bobby Sands MP” the cops were laying into us with fists and boots.

About 40 comrades were arrested, and a few were quite badly injured. I saw one young woman being kicked on the ground, and one lad from Leicester had to stay in hospital overnight after a savage beating from three coppers. Several banners were damaged, including Brent East CLP’s.

After this, some demonstrators went on to Downing Street, where further arrests were made.

On the bright side, this was the most serious attempt to date to defy the state ban on marches, and a definite political point was made, as reports were carried on Capital Radio about the protest.

**Next time we need more people, a bit more determination, and definitely we won’t take the police attack sitting down.**



# Where we stand

**Today one class, the working class, lives by selling its labour power to another, the capitalist class, which owns the means of production.**

The capitalists' control over the economy and their relentless drive to increase their wealth causes poverty, unemployment, the blighting of lives by overwork, imperialism, the destruction of the environment and much else.

Against the accumulated wealth and power of the capitalists, the working class must unite to struggle against capitalist power in the workplace and in wider society.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty wants socialist revolution: collective ownership of industry and services, workers' control, and a democracy much fuller than the present system, with elected representatives recallable at any time and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

We fight for trade unions and the Labour Party to break with "social partnership" with the bosses and to militantly assert working-class interests.

**In workplaces, trade unions, and Labour organisations; among students; in local campaigns; on the left and in wider political alliances we stand for:**

- ✂ Independent working-class representation in politics.
- ✂ A workers' government, based on and accountable to the labour movement.
- ✂ A workers' charter of trade union rights — to organise, to strike, to picket effectively, and to take solidarity action.
- ✂ Taxation of the rich to fund decent public services, homes, education and jobs for all.
- ✂ A workers' movement that fights all forms of oppression. Full equality for women, and social provision to free women from domestic labour. For reproductive justice: free abortion on demand; the right to choose when and whether to have children. Full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Black and white workers' unity against racism.
- ✂ Open borders.
- ✂ Global solidarity against global capital — workers everywhere have more in common with each other than with their capitalist or Stalinist rulers.
- ✂ Democracy at every level of society, from the smallest workplace or community to global social organisation.
- ✂ Equal rights for all nations, against imperialists and predators big and small.
- ✂ Maximum left unity in action, and openness in debate.

**If you agree with us, please take some copies of *Solidarity* to sell — and join us!**



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# What's in the democracy review?

## LABOUR

**Labour's National Executive Committee meeting on 18 September will be the last place the democracy review is discussed and amended before it is put before the 2018 conference.**

It is unclear exactly how the varying proposals will be voted on, or how they may interact or conflict with rule changes which are due for debate at this conference.

Hopefully the NEC will provide clarity on this point but delegates will probably not see the review until the eve of conference. To help support the democratic process, the review should be published as soon as possible following the NEC meeting, and at the conference it should be moved in parts allowing delegates to make proper decisions. The last time a review was undertaken, Refounding Labour, delegates were only able to see the document less than a week before publication and it was voted on as a whole by the conference.

The press have been mostly focused on Momentum's support for a version of mandatory reselection, which comes from a rule change rather than as part of the review.

There is an ongoing debate on what will happen with the trigger process for MPs. It is almost certain that no proposal outside of the democracy review, such as Labour International's rule change for "Open Selections" will be adopted. The Unions are unlikely to put their weight behind any proposals that are not covered in the review. John McDonnell hinted heavily when interviewed on the Today programme on 11 September that he does not believe there will be significant changes to the current trigger process, which he then went on



to defend as reasonable. Unlike McDonnell, *Solidarity* believes that mandatory reselection is a fundamental method of accountability for MPs, councillors and any other elected officials. McDonnell is busy trying to calm down growing tension with the Labour right and in response to the recent no confidence votes against a number of sitting Labour MPs.

## SCRAPPED

**The National Policy Forum is set to be scrapped, a welcome change and one that has been a key demand of the left since it was setup under Kinnock.**

Those elected to the NPF as of 3 September, will hopefully never meet! While abolition of the NPF will mean conference regains its sovereignty over policy, activists are still going to have to push for it to be enforced.

Despite a genuine commitment to party democracy, all policy that came into the 2017 manifesto, and since, has come from the Leaders and Shadow Cabinet offices. A lot of these proposals have been popular with members but they have failed to take into account actual

policy the Labour Party has. Similarly the votes won at conference in 2017 have hardly been mentioned let alone become policy or even campaigns.

The change in NEC elections is reasonable, to have a by-election in the case of a member stepping down rather than the highest loser getting an automatic place. Scottish and Welsh reps could now be elected by their conference delegates and in the event of the UK leaving the EU, the place for MEPs would be replaced by a dedicated place for a disabled member. A welcome development but representation for disabled members should exist regardless of Britain's relationship with the EU.

Rather than at the level of the leadership and governing of the whole party, some of the controversy was generated by a GMB-backed proposal that Labour members in an area would elect their own council leaders rather than the labour group. Not surprisingly the Councillors reps on the NEC are unhappy, both are right wingers.

**Sadly these proposals are now shelved awaiting further consultation.**

# TUC votes for gender self-ID

**By Rosalind Robson**

**TUC Conference has unanimously backed a motion from the TUC LGBT+ committee which supports "the introduction of a social rather than medical model of gender recognition that will help challenge repressive gender stereotypes in the workplace and in society."**

The motion was a response to the government's current consultation on changes to the 2004 Gender Recognition Act, which will run until the start of October.

The unanimous decision is especially welcome given the scaremongering surrounding the issue of

gender self-declaration that has taken place in the trade union movement, although arguably it has been less than elsewhere in society.

It will certainly help to move the debate forward in the labour movement and act as a pressure against those groups — right-wing Christians and some radical feminists — arguing against gender self-declaration.

The text of the motion also says: "As trade unionists we support trans workers rights, and as champions of equality we welcome the increased visibility and empowerment of transgendered and non-binary people in our society.

We call on the Government to

take note of global best practise on gender recognition and change the current processes for gender recognition that are lengthy, intrusive, humiliating and not fit for purpose.

We call on the TUC to campaign for a simplified, free, statutory gender recognition process based on self declaration and to support rights for gender non-binary people at work and in wider society.

We welcome the Government's commitment that the provisions in the Equality Act 2010 will remain.

**We support the right of all women (including trans women) to safe spaces and the continuation of monitoring that can help identify discrimination against women and men."**

## Events

### Sunday 16 September

**Queer Walking Tour of Brixton**  
1pm, meet at Herne Hill station, Railton Road, London SE24 0JW  
[bit.ly/2Qp1pzN](http://bit.ly/2Qp1pzN)

### Sunday 23 September

**Repeal the anti-union laws!**  
**Conference fringe with Matt Wrack**  
7pm, The Liverpool Pub, 14 James St, Liverpool L2 7PQ  
[bit.ly/2N5UItP](http://bit.ly/2N5UItP)

### Saturday 29 September

**Protest at Tory Party conference**  
12noon, Victoria Square, Birmingham  
[bit.ly/2x7u1Eu](http://bit.ly/2x7u1Eu)

**Have an event you want listing?**  
Email:  
[solidarity@workersliberty.org](mailto:solidarity@workersliberty.org)

### Left antisemitism: what it is and how to fight it

**Workers' Liberty public meetings**  
**Lewisham** Tuesday 18 September, 7.30, 388 New Cross Road, London SE14 6TY  
**Newcastle** Tuesday 18 September, 7pm, Room 2, Good Space, Commercial Union House, 39 Pilgrim Street, Newcastle NE1 6QE  
**Leeds** Monday 24 September, 7pm, Packhorse Pub, 208 Woodhouse Lane, Leeds LS2 9DX  
**North London** Thursday 4 October, details TBC  
**Northampton** Tuesday 9 October, 7.30pm, The Black Prince pub, 15 Abington Square, Northampton NN1 4AE

More details: [bit.ly/2QmOXAs](http://bit.ly/2QmOXAs)



# NEU Executive makes a difficult pay campaign harder

**By Patrick Murphy, National Education Union executive (personal capacity)**

In what has become a pattern, the government announced their decision on the 2018-19 teachers' pay award at the end of July when most schools had closed for the summer break.

Teachers do not have negotiating rights over national pay and, instead, annual awards are decided by the Secretary of State for Education following a review body recommendation. The teacher unions had submitted a claim for a 5% rise to the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB). In fact 5% is a long way short of what is required to undo 10 years of below-inflation pay awards. The figure was chosen on the basis that it matched the claims of most other public sector unions and made the prospects of a joint pay campaign more likely.

## REPORT

**The Review Body presented their Report to Damian Hinds in May but neither its contents nor his decision were made public until the end of July.**

We now know that the STRB recommended a 3.5% increase on all teacher pay ranges. This breach of the pay cap was based on evidence about the teacher recruitment and retention crisis and the STRB made it clear that, as a cost of living rise, they thought that it should go to all teachers. This last point matters considerably as teachers no longer have guaranteed pay scales but only pay ranges with maximum and minimum values. Hence it is perfectly legal for an employer to apply a national pay award only to the top and bottom of a scale and pay no increase to anyone in between.

In the event the Secretary of State decided not to accept the STRB recommendations in full. He announced a 3.5% increase for teachers on the main pay range, 2% on the upper pay range (more experienced) and 1.5% on the leadership range (heads, deputies, assistant heads). In response to significant pressure to fund this pay award in the light of cuts to school budgets he said schools would only have to fund the first 1% from existing budgets, the government would fund the rest.

It must be said that the initial response from the largest education union, the National Education Union (NEU), was poor. In a press statement they welcomed the 3.5% award and described it as "the penny finally dropping". Things didn't improve much over the summer with union communications focusing on the government's refusal to accept the STRB recom-



NEU members outside the DfE in July. The NEU called for a 5% raise.

mendation rather than the failure of both the Review Body and Secretary of State to accept the Union's claim. The NUT section's Conference policy is to fight for a 5% pay rise for all teachers and to ballot members for action in pursuit of that claim. By the end of August this had been rapidly reduced to campaigning for the 3.5% increase recommended by the STRB.

This shift was confirmed at the first National Executive of the year on 7 September. Officers of the Union proposed a campaign strategy which dropped the 5% claim and replaced it with the demand for the 3.5% recommended by the STRB. An amendment to this proposal tried to leave the question of our pay demand open pending a consultation with members but this was narrowly defeated. Had two Socialist Workers' Party members voted differently it would have passed. A further amendment which insisted that the demand in any action campaign should be 5% was more heavily defeated.

The case for shifting to a demand that the STRB recommendation is applied is mainly presentational. This is the first time a government has ignored the Review Body's recommendation and it will be much harder for them to defend their position publicly. When it comes to winning a ballot of members for national strike action, however, this shift is very dangerous. The majority of NEU teachers are paid on the main pay range and will be getting 3.5% in any case (unless their employer tries to pay it only to the top and bottom of the range, in which case there is a potential dispute with that employer). That majority will have nothing immediate or tangible to gain from a campaign for 3.5% for all. In effect the NEU will be asking the majority of its

members to vote for significant strike action in pursuit of an increase for their senior leaders and more experienced colleagues. At best this creates an unnecessary additional barrier to reaching the onerous ballot thresholds imposed by the Trade Union Act. At worst it is a calculated decision to settle for yet another political campaign to expose the government rather than an industrial dispute which seeks to win.

## EXECUTIVE

**At the 7 September Executive it was argued that a recent dispute in East Sussex proved that members would take action even where they had nothing to gain.**

In that case a large number of schools met the ballot thresholds in a campaign to ensure that all main range teachers got last year's 2% rise. This was a fairly cynical argument which ignored the fact that the strikes in east Sussex were sustained with strike pay, it is a very well-organised and led division and considerable national resources were (quite rightly) thrown into winning. None of these factors would apply across the country in a national ballot and this was pointed out by the Executive member for East Sussex who moved and voted for the amendment to leave the question of our claim open for now rather than reduce it to 3.5%.

The task for NEU members now is to build the pay campaign as it is and work as hard as we can to win support for action to increase the award and ensure that it is fully funded. If a serious fight can be generated around those issues it could make a real difference.

**The decision of the NEU Executive has made that possibility a lot harder but it hasn't made it any less necessary.**

# Home care workers fight £2m cuts



**By Gemma Short**

**Home care enablement workers in Birmingham have struck for over 17 days since January in a long running fight over unworkable shift patterns and a pay cut as the council imposes £2m of cuts in social care.**

Workers struck for nine days in August. They will strike again for five days from Wednesday 12 September, five days from 24 September and a final five from 5 October. When the strike started in January, workers were trying to

save 40% of jobs. Unfortunately the council has managed to impose those job cuts, but are seeking to make even more cuts. New cuts would see 55 jobs go and all workers forced onto part-time contracts whilst simultaneously tendering out more work to the private sector.

**A rally will be held at 12noon on Saturday 15 September, Victoria Square, Birmingham in support of the strike.**

• Send messages of support to [caroline.johnson@birminghamu-](mailto:caroline.johnson@birminghamu-)

# Tube drivers in strike vote

**By Ollie Moore**

**Members of drivers' union Aslef on London Underground are balloting for industrial action to win safer cabs.**

Unions say a recent incident on the Northern Line, in which passengers broke into the cab of a female driver and attacked her, vindicate long-running union complaints about the lack of security of drivers' cab doors. Aslef's ballot began on 4 September. RMT says it is also considering balloting its driver members.

Unions are demanding a safe locking system for drivers' cabs. London Underground has claimed

this would be too expensive to install, with unions countering that they shouldn't have to haggle over staff safety.

If strikes were to take place, it is likely the entire Tube network would be severely affected, with few, if any, trains running.

Meanwhile, RMT is preparing to ballot its driver members on the Central Line to demand the reinstatement of Paul Bailey, a driver sacked after "failing" a drug test that in fact showed he was within the acceptable limits for cannabinoids.

**An RMT statement said: "This travesty calls into question the integrity of the entire drugs and alcohol policy testing regime."**

# Guards vote to continue strikes

**By Ollie Moore**

**Guards on South Western Railway have voted by 88% to continue their industrial action, aimed at preventing the imposition of "Driver Only Operation".**

Unions are required to regularly re-ballot in ongoing industrial disputes; the majority represents an increased mandate for strikes.

South Western is one of several companies attempting to remove safety-critical guards from its services. Workers struck most recently on 8 September, alongside guards

on Northern.

Guards on Southern, Mersey Rail, and Greater Anglia have also taken action recently, as part of a national RMT campaign to defend the role of the guard.

On Mersey Rail, the union and the company recently reached an "agreement in principle" that all trains will have a second member of staff on them when the company's new fleet is launched in 2021.

**A joint statement said "additional funding will now need to be generated" to finance the second staff member.**





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## After Labour's IRHA row: Yes, "smash Israel" is antisemitic!

By Gerry Bates

The Labour Party's National Executive Committee (NEC) has decided to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition of antisemitism in full. This is a step forward for Labour but only after weeks of indecision, confusion and lack of leadership in a row which may have caused a great deal of damage.

In adopting the IHRA definition, the NEC added a qualifying statement stressing that freedom of speech should be allowed in relation to criticism of the Israeli government. But the IHRA should not be an impediment to free speech unless it is used cynically or bureaucratically. It is therefore unclear what purpose this statement serves.

Some of the left also said the row was entirely generated by Labour's right-wing, the media, and the conservative leadership of the Jewish community. But antisemitism on the left and in Labour is real! It is rooted in the left's hostility to the very existence of Israel.

Labour Party leaders will now try to draw a line under the row but that is unlikely to happen as long as hardcore anti-Zionist leftists interpret the IHRA as limiting free speech and will be tempted to intentionally and pointedly try to



Lobby of Labour's NEC and against the IHRA definitions

defy the IHRA.

Criticism of Israel, even severe or even unreasonable criticism of Israel, should of course be tolerated. If people are gross and persistently antisemitic in their depiction of Jews then disciplinary action may be appropriate, but the basic approach in the labour movement should be to debate ideas.

It is bad that damage has been done to Labour but a big part of the fault lies with those on the left who cannot see that hostility to Israel's very existence is antisemitic.

**"Smash Israel" is antisemitic because it disregards the right of Hebrew-speaking Jewish people in Israel to a right to self-determination, and because it delegitimises the affinity most Jews feel for Israel.**

## A racist endeavour?

By Michael Elms

One of the eleven examples of antisemitism in the IHRA is this: "Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a state of Israel is a racist endeavour."

With the IHRA adoption by Labour, some on the Labour left, has asserted their "right" to call Israel a "racist endeavour".

Shortly after the Labour NEC vote a posters carrying the slogan "Israel is a racist endeavour" popped up around London.

At first appearance it seems not an unreasonable slogan: Israel's government is doing a lot of racist things, passing racist laws and occupying another country.

But if any other country were to conduct an occupation or war of aggression (like the UK, or Saudi Arabia) or a dirty, colonial war (like Turkey), or to pass racist laws (like Hungary), the left would say something like "the government should stop doing that." "End the occupation!" "Amend the constitution!" "Repeal the racist law!" "Independence for the oppressed people!"

But the "racist endeavour" slogan on the posters makes no such demand of Israel. The "demand", if there is one, is: "Israel should cease to exist". More than that, be-

cause Israel's very existence is racist, if you don't agree that Israel should cease to exist, then you are a racist, too.

But the overwhelming majority of the world's Jews have, or feel, some connection to Israel: if they don't have family there, they'll often know someone who does. That is a result of racism — that is, of the Holocaust and the world-wide slamming of doors in Jewish refugees' faces; and the post-World War Two ethnic cleansing of Jews from much of the Middle East, and the post-World War Two Stalinist purges of "Zionists". With whatever misgivings (polls show that most British Jews feel some connection to Israel but disapprove of its actions), with whatever criticism or whatever complicated feelings or political opinions, the majority want Israel to continue to exist. Not all, by any means! But most.

So if the left chooses to make its battle-cry, not "justice for the Palestinians", not "independence for Palestine now!", but "Israel's existence is racist; Israel must cease to exist; if you disagree then you are a racist!" — what does that imply about the relationship of the left to the majority of the world's Jews?

You can't maintain this point of view without running up against this contradiction. And too many leftists are deciding to resolve the

contradiction by regarding Jews with suspicion until they prove themselves to be "anti-Zionists".

Another absurdity of the posture of the hardcore anti-Zionist left is this: from the point of view of the struggle for Palestinian freedom, the right of middle-aged Labour Party members to say vaguely offensive things about Jews on Facebook is a non-issue. But such is the epic self-regard of the "anti-Zionists" that they have elevated this non-issue to being the most central, most urgent political question of the day. The obsessive heat generated by their fight gives us an idea of where their priorities lie: with their right to spout invective about "the Zionists" more than with Palestinian rights.

Corbyn's stated position on this issue is good, so we should build on that, try to make some ground against hardcore anti-Zionism, and in the meantime direct our fire on the Israeli government. Or for that matter the US government, which is also very busy right now undermining Palestinian rights.

**For the two nations we advocate two states. For an independent Palestine and equal rights for ethnic minorities within Israel. For workers' unity, for solidarity and direct links with those fighting for rights and democracy in Israel-Palestine.**

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